



Georgia's Source for Finding Quality Child Care

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BRIGHT FROM THE START: GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CARE AND LEARNING INTRODUCES STATEWIDE CHILD CARE REFERRAL SERVICE

1-877-ALL GA KIDS connects families with child care throughout state

ATLANTA (DATE) – Beginning today, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is introducing a new service to help families locate accessible, affordable, quality child care. By calling toll-free – 1-877-ALL GA KIDS – families can learn about licensed child care in one of Georgia's approximately 3,000 child care learning centers, 250 group day care homes, and 5,300 family day care homes all across the state.

Callers to 1-877-ALL GA KIDS will speak to trained staff from Quality Care for Children, an independent, not-for-profit organization with whom Bright from the Start has contracted to consolidate information about child care providers in all 159 counties and to oversee the new referral service. Quality Care for Children representatives will help families connect with child care providers in their area who are licensed, convenient to work or home, and within the family budget. They will also provide information and advice on how to select a qualified child care provider. A searchable database will also be available at www.allgakids.org.

"Our goal is to equip parents with as much information as possible in order for them to make the best decisions for their families," said Dr. Holly Robinson, commissioner of Bright from the Start. "1-877-ALL GA KIDS is Georgia's source for parents to locate quality child care whether they are north in Fannin County or at the southern tip of the state in Lowndes County."

An estimated 64% of families in Georgia use child care, and demand is growing as more family members work outside the home. Quality Care for Children CEO Pam Tatum said as tough economic conditions put an additional strain on the child care services families use, more parents are turning to unlicensed providers who might cost less but aren't always safe or properly trained.

"In the 30 years Quality Care for Children has been operating, this may prove to be the most challenging time yet for the families we serve," Tatum said. "Many are overwhelmed by what's happened with the economy, and they're struggling to make difficult financial choices, so this referral program could not have come at a better time."

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www.allgakids.org



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About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.state.ga.us.

About Quality Care for Children

Quality Care for Children is Georgia's leader in equipping parents and child care providers with the tools they need to receive and provide high quality, affordable child care so that all children have access to superior early learning experiences and are ready for school. For more information, go to www.qualitycareforchildren.org.

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